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P.E. Church

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1955

BRAZIL

today



Theological
Seminary
Porto Alegre



Poultry Yard
Boys' Home
Bogé

ON TRINITY SUNDAY, A LITTLE MORE THAN SIXTY years ago, a small house in the city of Porto Alegre, Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil, a new branch of the Anglican Communion was born. On that day at three o'clock in the afternoon the first official service of the Brazilian Episcopal Church was held by two young and enthusiastic missionaries who had gone out from Virginia Seminary: James Watson Morris and Lucien Lee Kinsolving.

Embued with a love for Cod and His children, filled with missionary zeal, and with a faith that could not be quenched, these two young men had set forth from their homeland to build a branch of the Episcopal Church in that country south of the Equator. It was a venture of faith for they were to be supported only through the loving gifts of those friends and organizations at home who were interested in seeing the Church planted in Brazil. Arriving in Brazil on September 26, 1889, they proceeded to Cruzeiro in the State of Sao Paulo. There they remained for six months, living in the home of a Presbyterian minister and learning Portuguese.

A study of the country convinced them that the greatest opportunity for the Church lay in the great State of Rio Grande do Sul. Here was a vast area with lovely small cities and great *fazendas*, but where the State-Church was very weak and where many towns and cities had no Church life of any sort. To this part of the country they made their way, and it was in the capital city of this State they decided to begin the task of bringing into being *Igreja Episcopal Brasileira*.

A New Christian Force

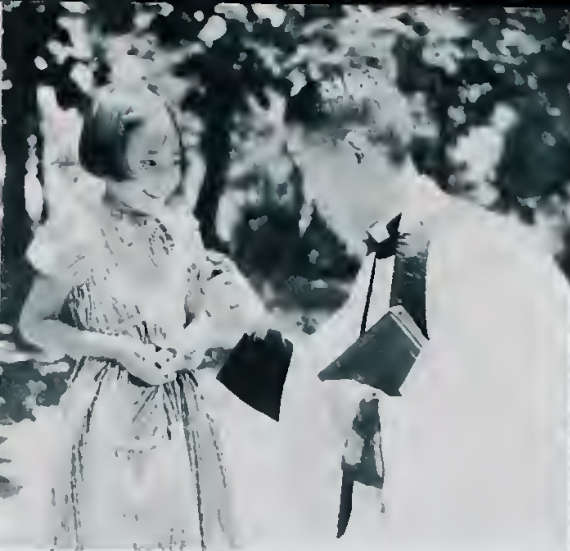
FROM that little house in Porto Alegre, from that small group who had gathered there to inaugurate this new venture, there streamed a new Christian force and power that reached into the lives of many people and made possible those firm foundations on which we are seeking to build this sister branch of the Anglican Communion.

Christian Good — Neighborliness

THROUGHOUT the sixty-odd years since that first service in Porto Alegre, the Brazilian Church has worked toward that end. Spreading to urban and rural areas in the south, it reached into the hearts of men and women and boys and girls and gave them a new conception of God and His love. As the Rt. Rev. W. M. M. Thomas, second Bishop of the Brazilian Church, wrote:

“The Brazilian Episcopal Mission has from the first endeavored to practice the doctrine of Christian Good-Neighborliness. Criticism, when it has been necessary, of existing institutions has been presented constructively. Only in a spirit of humility and sincere desire for the common welfare has this Church in Brazil sought to sow the seed of knowledge of Christ where Christ is not followed nor His will obeyed.”

Today, the Church has spread not only to all parts of the State of Rio Grande do Sul but into the States of Santa Catarina, Paraná, Sao Paulo, Rio de Janeiro and the Federal District. In 178 parishes and missions and preaching stations it has thirty thousand baptized members of whom nine thousand are communicants. It contributed



Young Japanese
Brazilian With
Archdeacon Ito



Calvary Church
Santa Rita

for the support of its own work in a recent year more than eighty thousand dollars. It has its own theological seminary for the training of its own national clergy.

Two Great Schools

It has two great schools, Southern Cross, Porto Alegre, and St. Margaret's, Pelotas, plus many smaller parochial schools and a commercial institute. There is a growing sense of social responsibility and a realization of the necessity of well planned and well run institutions. Thus in this field there are three homes for aged women, an orphanage for girls, two Boys' Towns, a hostel for unemployed, and a free clinic for indigent people. All this work carried on by the Brazilians themselves. So the Church seeks to obey the command of the Master: Go preach, go teach, go heal. Little by little there is an increasing understanding of the destiny of the Brazilian Church and the realization that the existing work must be supported through the efforts of Brazilian churchmen. It will take time, it will take sacrifices, but it will come.

Three Dioceses Organized

WHEN in 1950, the Brazilian Mission was divided into three missionary districts with one American bishop and two Brazilian bishops, another great step was taken toward the fulfillment of that desire for an independent Church. A National Council was organized and granted an autonomy over certain phases of the work of the Brazilian Church. Today it functions smoothly, working

through departments. This whole program has given new life to the Church, a new sense of responsibility, a new hope, and a new vision. The dream of the early founders of the mission is that much closer to realization.

The Problems are Many

THE opportunities confronting the Brazilian Church are terrific, the problems are many. Before it can achieve the goal of an independent Church, it must meet the problems and take advantage of the opportunities. The crying need today is for missionaries, adequately supported, able to go into new areas and open new work. The present field of activity in the Central and Southern part of the country embraces only about one-third of Brazil. The whole North and North Central part has not been touched, and even when the Church is at work, there are rural areas and progressive, growing cities where it has no activity due to lack of personnel and means. Constantly the bishops are confronted with the question: *When is the Episcopal Church going to open a work in our town?*

Brazil is on The Move

BRAZIL is on the move. It is passing from an agricultural to an industrial nation. Its great rivers are being harnessed to provide power; its antiquated railroad system is being revamped and modernized; a road building program has been inaugurated that will bring the products of the interior to the great seaport towns; its docks and harbors are being enlarged and improved

to serve the great vessels of all nations that fetch and carry the cargoes of the world. With it all is a new sense of the part Brazil must play in maintaining a free world.

A Strong Approach Needed

ALL this presents a tremendous challenge to the Church. Increasingly there is the feeling that a strong approach is necessary in Brazil; that a religion based, not on superstition and fear, but on the full, free love of the heavenly Father can be the force that will guide the country into the right paths of the future. The *Igreja Episcopal Brasileira* has a wonderful appeal to the people of the country. The great tragedy is that the Church does not have the men and the means to take advantage of the openings that confront it on every side. It has a plan and a policy and strategy. It believes that it is not good business to go on forever expecting support from the mother Church. It believes that it must work harder than ever toward self-support. But it knows the weaknesses of its present resources, and the need right now for generous help from fellow Churchmen in the United States; the Brazilian Church needs their prayers and their interest, that it may build in the waste places, that it may extend its influence, that it may move forward as the country moves forward.

*This folder is adapted from an article in Forth
by the Rt. Rev. Louis C. Melcher*



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